



Women's Empowerment through Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene Management

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Abstract

Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) has a broad impact on society, including culture, health, and economy. While the scholarship has recently exposed existing gaps in understanding the issue at large, this research interrogates the connection between health and empowerment of women, that would lead to positive outcomes in economic development. MHM usually results in absenteeism in school, the project argues that promoting menstrual hygiene management in schools could keep them enrolled in schools for longer periods, resulting in higher literacy, numeracy, skills-generation, and greater long-term economic growth, and economic empowerment of women.



Source: <http://rubycup.com/social-mission/how-ruby-cup-works/>

Sustainable Development Goals

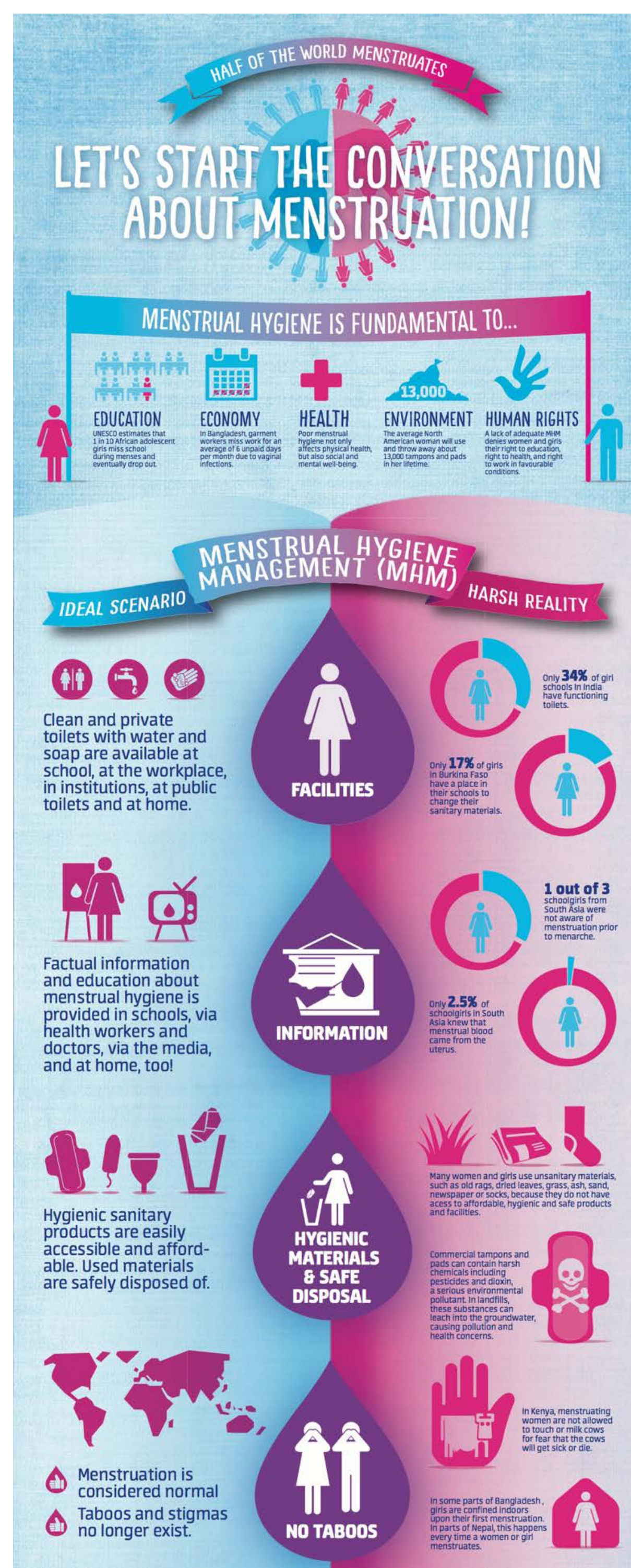
Female students and teachers, in states like Uganda, tend to face hardship every month at the time of their menstrual period. As a result, drop-out rates are high and evidence point to deficient menstrual hygiene management (MHM). Majority of these females are not receiving the necessary education about proper menstrual hygiene management, which is crucial for keeping girls in school. Furthermore, lacking facilities can also be associated with drop-out rates. Key SDGs will therefore not be achieved. Goals promoting equality, education, health, and sustainability, related to the MHM problem are the following:

- **Goal 3.** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- **Goal 4.** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **Goal 5.** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- **Goal 6.** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

This poses the research question: Can the promotion of menstrual hygiene management in schools improve women's empowerment by raising class attendance and by keeping girls in school?

Issues and Restrictions

Restrictions girls and women face include: absence of facilities; inadequate education and material; cultural taboos. Efforts to solve the problem have been inadequate. Inadequate information and supplies exacerbate fear and uncertainty about the biological process, resulting in absenteeism, truancy, mental health issues, and cultural pressures.



Source: https://chelseaducharme.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/mhday_infographics_fin.jpg

These problems are also affected by the unavailability and prices of sanitary materials.

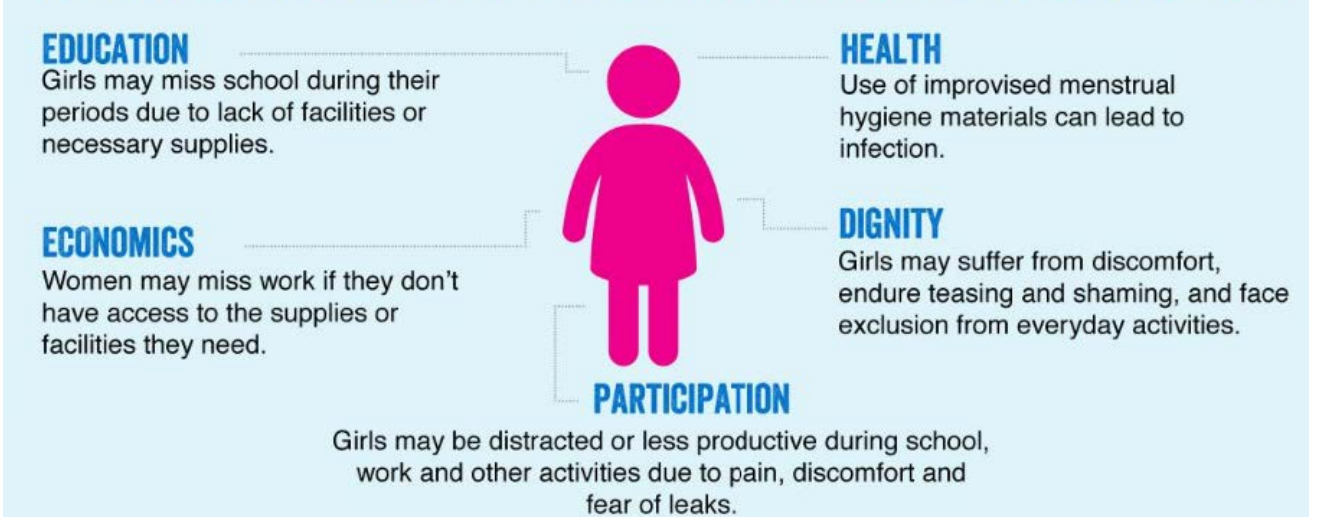
Recommendations



Source: http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1425566/menstrual-hygiene-management-matters

Various outlets have tried to supply female students with proper materials, but in vain due to insufficient facilities and education. The girls receiving the materials lack the "know how" on how to use certain materials properly, or experience too much cultural pressure to ensure proper use.

MENSTRUATION CAN AFFECT ALL ASPECTS OF A GIRL'S LIFE:



Source: <http://vietnamfriendship.vn/Ugandan-girls-empowered-by-menstrual-hygiene-training-07-12549.html>

The solution must target schools infrastructure, access to low cost sanitary materials such as the Afripad and the Makapad, and cultural myths and taboos, through proper education about menstrual hygiene management. Changes are needed in the national curriculum to change cultural norms, which will lead to a more sustainable development on the way to achieving SDGs.

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